

ACORN

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A society incorporated in 1933 for the preservation of the best examples of the architecture of the province, and for the protection of its places of natural beauty.

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Stapleton House near Clinton, Ontario.
L-R William Hearn, Jill Ransford Tookey,
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Photo courtesy of John Rutledge

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Cash Calendar

We have taken the liberty of sending you a copy of our 1995 Cash Calendar. We are indebted to Vice-president Rod Angevaere for this excellent fund raising initiative. If you have not already purchased a copy please fill out and detach the card on the back cover and mail it into the Head Office along with your cheque for \$20.00.

It has been apparent for some time that the crucial role that volunteers can play in the day-to-day operation of organizations such as the ACO is changing. So the provincial executive and council has been struggling for at least six years over how to raise the money we need to continue operating. Rod's calendar - really a lottery - is one of the least painful ways of accomplishing that goal. If you find that you cannot support us through the Calendar, please offer it to a friend or family member.

Council News

HERITAGE CAMBRIDGE TRIUMPH

After roughly 25 years of negotiations on the part of Waterloo Region's heritage community, including a valiant effort by the Waterloo Regional Heritage Foundation in the 1980's, Heritage Cambridge has succeeded in purchasing the historic Sheave Tower. The purchase was carried out through the Branch's Community Heritage Fund, set up under a then Ministry of Culture and Communications program, and contributions from private citizens. More in this issue.

NEW PLANNING ACT

ACO President Alec Keefer announced with great pleasure (and some surprise) that changes which should result in much improved protection for cultural resources, buildings included, will be incorporated in the Act. These changes affect, for example, circulation of plans of sub-division to the Ministry of Culture Tourism and Recreation - presently only 20% of subdivision plans go to review.

MARKETING/FUND RAISING STUDY

A second draft of the study was sent to the branches prior to the November Council meeting, and presented by Genovese Vanderhoof & Associates at that meeting. Further comment was invited before the document is finalized, but Council is already making preliminary plans to implement some of the recommendations. These include ways to broaden the scope of Acorn and the Advisory Board, both of which were identified in the Strategic Planning forums as key elements of the ACO's public presence.

TOWN CENTRE VIDEO

A grant from the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Recreation has made possible the production of a 23-minute educational video based on the research and filming of 14 of Ontario's historic downtowns. Case studies will be selected to explore factors determining the shape and form of Ontario's town centres: the Plan of Survey, as in the Town of Goderich; cultural and social influences, such as that of the aboriginal peoples who chose Brantford; transportation routes, such as the canal at Dundas; and geology - gypsum deposits even gave the Town of Paris its name. Study kits will be designated for classroom use.

Margaret Goodbody

Correction

The Toronto Region Branch's book on Etobicoke's Kingsway Park community is titled *Kingsway Park: Triumph in Design - An Architectural Study of a Planned Community, 1924-1949*. The photographs that appeared in issue XIX-3 were taken by Mr. W.D. Brown (Doug). The caption for one of the photographs should read 75 Willingdon Road.

Kingsway Park: Triumph in Design is available from the Toronto Region Branch for \$20.00 plus \$4.00 for postage and handling. Mail Address: TRAC, P.O. Box 7162, Station A, Toronto, M5W 1X8.

Stapleton

This is a brief history of "Stapleton", the house which was built by Henry Ransford in 1834 as compiled from his memoirs recorded in 1881.

Henry Ransford was born in 1804 in Stapleton, a village near Bristol, England. He seems to have been a real entrepreneur and a great innovator, not afraid to try his hand at anything. He would like to have been a shipbuilder, but never achieved that desire. Instead, at twenty years of age, he was manager of a sugar plantation in Jamaica where he directed the rebuilding of boiling works to refine sugar cane. In his forties, he erected the most complete set of corn starch works then in England. In his sixties, he directed his sons, Richard and John, in the building of salt works here at Stapleton, which involved an early Canadian patent for evaporating pans. The original of this patent is still here at Stapleton among his papers. During his lifetime he also built three houses, two in this area and one in England, lived the life of a pioneer farmer, and took part in local Upper Canada politics. The first house that he built was this one, which he named after his boyhood home in England.

Henry Ransford first came to Canada in 1832 and bought 3400 acres of land from the Canada Company. "I fixed on a pretty spot overlooking the river on lots 39 and 40," according to his memoirs written in 1881. He got three or four acres cleared and raised the frame of the house, as well as roofing and shingling it. He engaged a carpenter to floor the house, get the siding on, and make the windows while he returned to England.

In May 1834, he sailed to Canada with his new bride, Frances, hired man, Thomas Walker with his wife and family of four, and all their belongings. After landing at New York, they came up the Hudson River by steamer and reached Buffalo via the Erie Canal on June 14. They got a small steamer to Port Stanley and hired wagons to London. The road north of London was nearly impassable but they found a man who was willing to take them on.

Three days later, after upsetting the wagon in a swamp, rebuilding a log bridge over a creek near what is now Lucan, and breaking and repairing the

tongue of the wagon, they arrived at Venderburgh's Corner (Clinton).

The next day Henry walked out to see his house, and found that the carpenter had done nothing but put siding on the east end so the families had to stay at the tavern while Henry "hurried on the carpenters".

"We got all the siding on, the lower and half the upper floor laid, the doors hung and the unglazed sashes in, when owing to the discomfort of the tavern, we moved in." The Ransfords lived on the south side, the hired man and his family on the north. "I and my wife slept on half the upper floor which we reached by a ladder that I had to make before we could go to bed."

The kitchen and fireplace were a hemlock stump outside the house, and their dinner table a broad cherry board, six feet long on a flour barrel. Chairs were trunks and boxes, and the piano case made a "capital cupboard".

"We hauled limestone up from the river and burnt sufficient lime to give a good coat of plaster to the inside of the house which of course had to be lathed. I had brought out trowels and did all the plastering with my own hands, Thomas mixing and bring the mortar to me."

"Building the chimney was also a big hob, as I had to make a stone foundation some eight or ten feet square and 4 feet in height. The stones had to be brought up from the river and some small boulders we found on the land. Clay worked up was substituted for mortar and fully answered the purpose as it has stood for forty-six years. (Written in 1881.)

"I was lucky to get a bricklayer, Jerry Atkins. After cutting a hole through the roof for the chimney, it set in to rain and snow and I had to sit over it with an umbrella for three or four hours, so that the man should not stop working. The evenings were getting cold and only those who have gone through the same labour, anxiety and toil can enter into the feeling of delight when a blazing fire was roaring up the chimney and we all sat round and enjoyed it."

Henry had only completed plastering their bedroom and making their bedstead two or three days when on October twenty-fifth his wife Frances gave birth to a baby girl. "Thomas was sent off to Goderich on foot, eighteen miles for the doctor who rode back just in time, but I had to lend him a suit of

clothes as he was wet through and mud from head to foot. Such as bush life in those days."

This is only the first part of Henry Ransford's story. Four of his children were born at Stapleton, and four more at the second house, Clifton, in Goderich. The family moved to Goderich in 1841 and back to England in 1846. Thomas Walker and his family obtained land from Henry Ransford and remained in this area, where many of their descendants still live.

Henry's son Richard returned to Stapleton in 1861. Six years later Henry instructed him to sink a well at Stapleton to look for oil. At 1200 feet they came to pure rock salt and brine. A thriving industry soon grew up around the well. There were many sheds for horses and wagons, a cooperage shop, boiler house, engine room, salt pans, etc. A wooden trestle over the Bayfield River was constructed for a tramway connecting the salt works by a switch with the Grand Trunk.

About 1874 Richard restored and made additions to Stapleton house for himself and his new bride "Florrie" Hale, daughter of Clinton resident Horatio Hale, ethnologist and lawyer, famous for his studies of the North American Indian.

In 1881 Henry Ransford wrote down the story of his life as a keepsake for his children. At that time six of his children were living in England, and his two sons, Richard and John were living here at Stapleton running the farm and the saltworks. This book was passed on to John's son Melville and subsequently to the future owners of this house.

Richard and John continued manufacturing salt until the 1900's by which time they were running out of the cheap fuel, wood, which was needed to evaporate the brine. Richard retired early due to poor health and John continued on his own. The salt business was losing money and he sold much of his property to pay the expenses.

Stapleton now consists of fifteen acres of land surrounding Henry's one hundred and sixty year old house overlooking the Bayfield River, just as he had planned it. The house has had three owners since the Ransfords: Mrs. Willis, an antique dealer; the Adshead family; and now the Hearn. Because all three have taken such an interest in the house and its history, the papers and other mementos remain intact for future owners to enjoy.

In 1967 Mrs. Willis had a small tower erected to house the clock from the old Clinton Post Office. By 1989 this tower was badly in need of repair, so the present owners replaced it with a new clock tower similar to the Post Office tower. The clock was then dismantled, cleaned and repaired and installed in the new tower. It keeps excellent time.

Four years ago contact was made with Henry Ransford's descendants who live in England. There has been considerable correspondence since then and in September 1992, Henry's great-great-great-grandchildren, Andrew and Caroline Ransford from Southern England crossed the threshold of the old house. It was a momentous occasion.

This year, 160 years almost to the day after Henry brought his bride to this, their new home in Upper Canada, his great-great-granddaughter, Jill Ransford Tookey, has come from Kent, England to visit the house.

William & Mary Hearn

Rideau Corridor

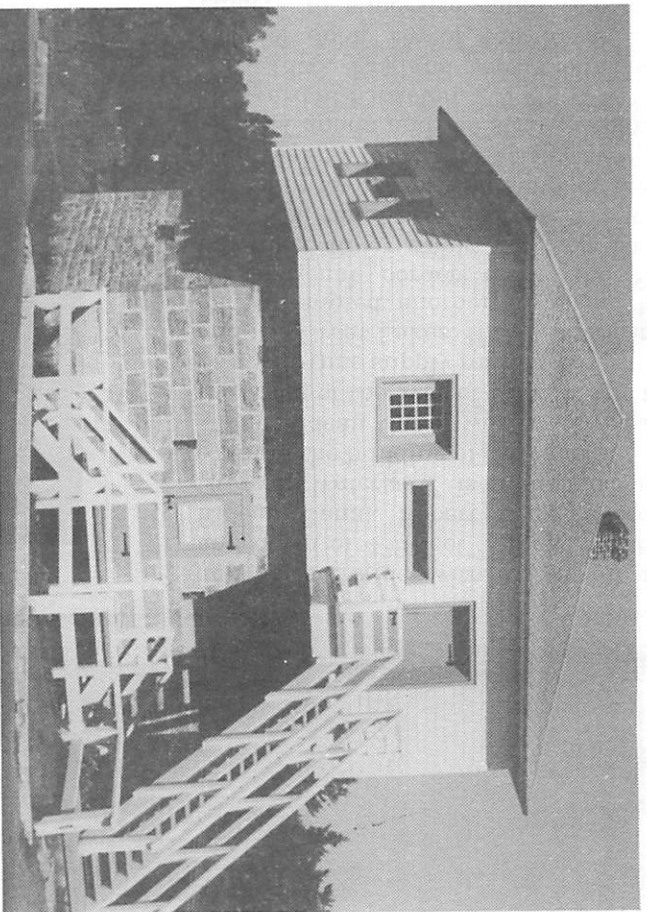
The 1995 ACO Annual Meeting will take place in Ottawa on May 17-21. We thought it would be appropriate to give you a brief sketch of the history and architecture as well as a bit of scenery that await those who visit this fascinating area of eastern Ontario.

We have not discussed the two major cities of the corridor, Kingston and Ottawa. They are both worthy of much more space than this issue allows.

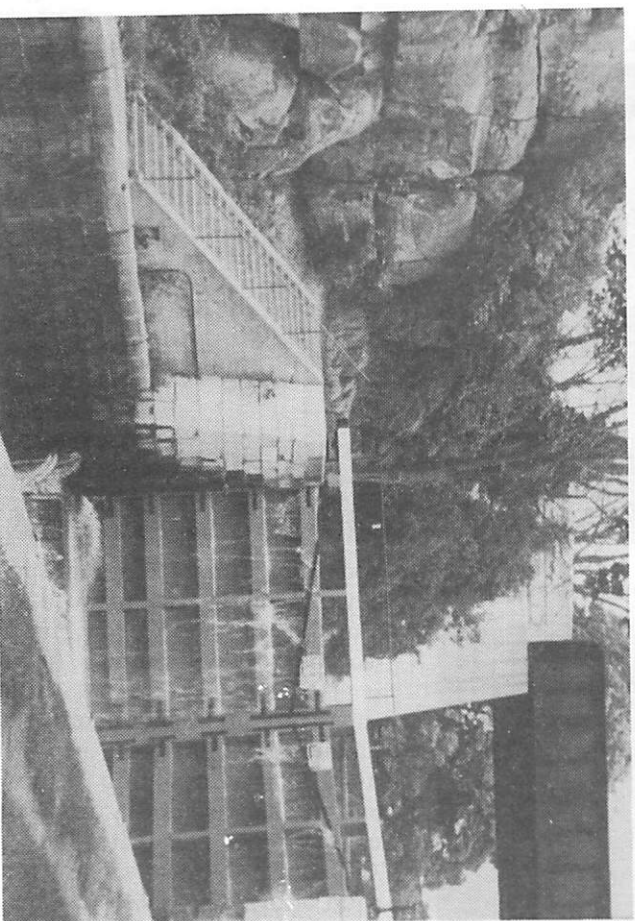
Although there is no branch of the ACO in this area at present, a member of the Quinte Branch, Shirley Watton, has been very active in trying to get a branch organized. We hope this will soon be a reality since this historic and architecturally significant region would most certainly benefit by having a branch of the ACO.

SETTLEMENT

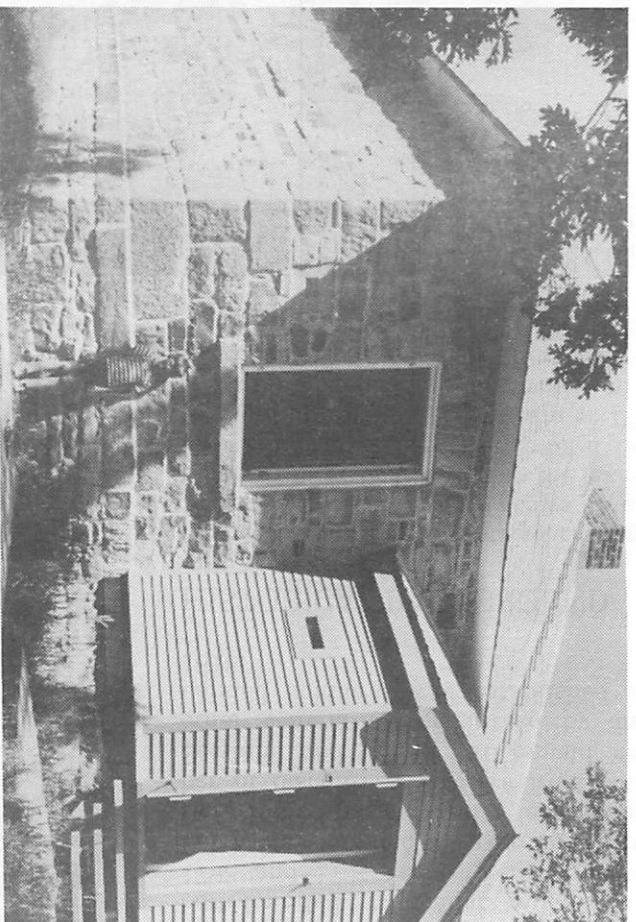
"The first settlement of a permanent nature in the Rideau Corridor was made in the late 18th century by United Empire Loyalists seeking refuge from the United States following the War of Independence. Settlement in Canada at that time was made doubly attractive by land grants offered by



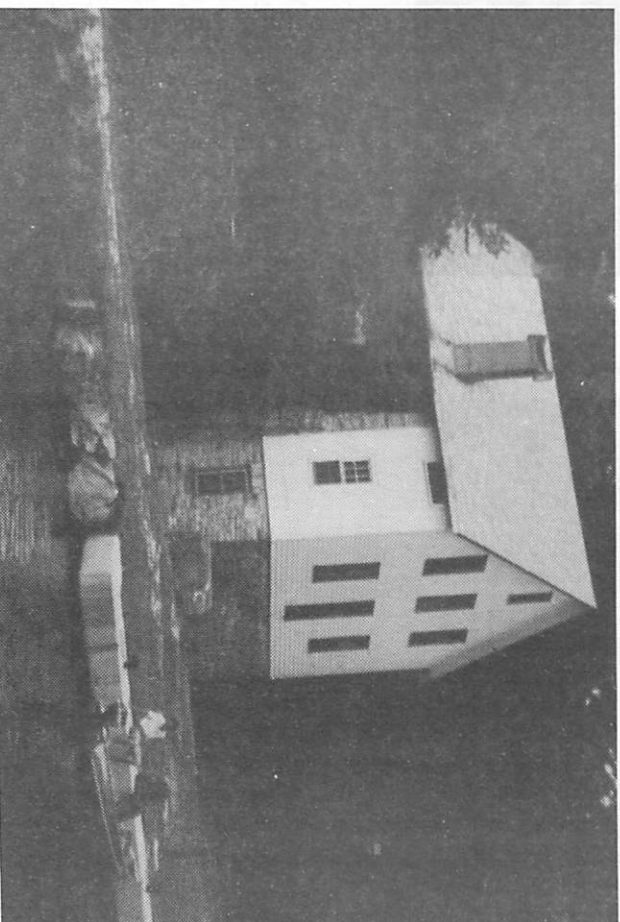
Blockhouse at Kingston Mills. It has been reconstructed and now houses a museum.
Bob Rowell



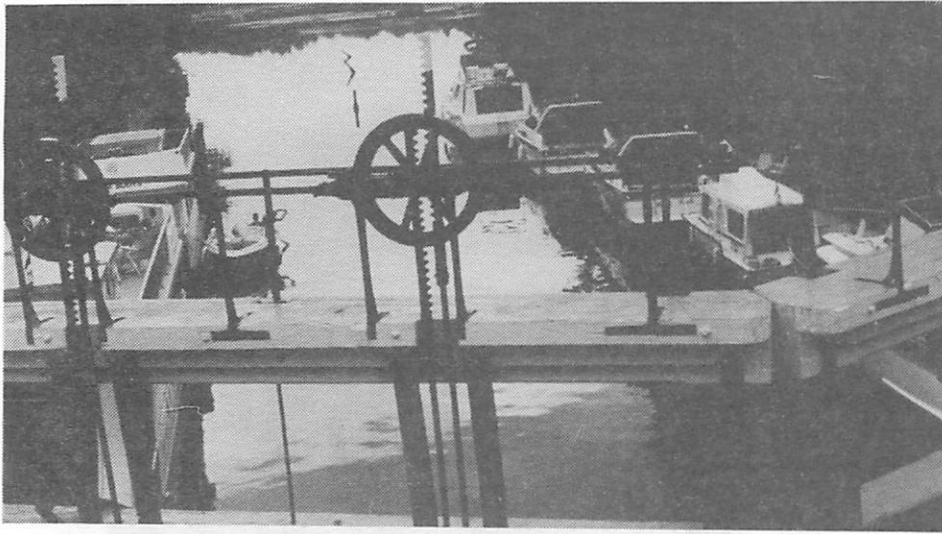
Lock at Kingston Mills.
Bob Rowell



Defensible lock master's house at James Falls.
Bob Rowell



Mill at Chaffey's Lock on the Rideau Canal.
Bob Rowell



Chaffey's Lock, lock gates and mechanism for raising and lowering water in the locks.
Bob Rowell

the British government as a reward for loyal services during the war. As a result many hundred of British Americans arrived in Upper Canada, bringing with them very few material goods but a great deal of experience in frontier living. For a number of years the Loyalists constituted the bulk of the population along the Rideau, but about 1820 a great wave of immigration to Upper Canada began from England, Ireland and Scotland. Peaking in the early 1830s, this was to continue until 1850, and in its course completely changed the nature of the British North American Colonies, swapping the old Loyalist and American communities with Irishmen, Scotchmen and Englishmen new to the New World and its ways.

The first community to be established in the area was Kingston, chosen as a naval base in 1792. Burritts Rapids and Merrickville followed,



Stone house in Perth, Ontario.
Bob Rowell



William Merrick house, about 1820, Merrickville, Ontario. The verandah and decorative bargeboard are later additions.
Bob Rowell

both founded by Loyalists mill-sites in 1793 and 1794 respectively. In 1816 Perth was founded by a group of settlers from Scotland and a large number of discharged soldiers from both Scotland and Canada. Richmond, another community originated by disbanded soldiers, was established in 1818.¹

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Rideau Corridor stretches from Kingston in the south to Ottawa in the north. It more or less follows the lakes, rivers and canal that covers a total distance of approximately 202 km or 123 1/2 miles, depending on which historical account you read. "Forty-seven locks each measuring 134 feet long

and 33 feet wide, with a total lift up and down of 439 feet"² make up the Rideau Canal. Robert Legget's book "Rideau Waterway" is a detailed account of the building of the canal.

The Rideau Canal was conceived in the wake of the War of 1812. It was to be a war-time supply route to Kingston and the Great Lakes. If the Americans had attempted another invasion, the international border along the St. Lawrence River would not have been safe. The canal provided a secure water route for troops and supplies from Montreal to reach the settlements of Upper Canada and the strategic naval dockyard at Kingston.

In 1826, England sent Lieutenant Colonel John By of the Royal Engineers to supervise canal construc-

tion. Thousands of Irish immigrants and French Canadian labourers pushed the canal route through the rough bush, swamps and rocky wilderness of Eastern Ontario. Stonemasons cut the limestone and sandstone blocks for the locks. Much of this original work can still be seen and is in use today.

Completed in 1832, the canal was one of the greatest engineering feats of the 19th century. The war feared by the British never materialized and the canal soon became a major artery for regional commerce. This role continued for several decades, but began to decline with the completion of the St. Lawrence canal system and the introduction of the railway in the 1850s. Though local trade continued, a new era of luxury steamboats began introducing passengers to the Rideau over the next 50 years.



Aaron Merrick House, Merrickville, Ontario, 1845.
Bob Rowell



Blockhouse Museum at Merrickville, 1832.
Bob Rowell

Today, the log rafts, barges and steamers have given way to pleasure boats, while roads provide easy access to the canal by land.

The Tay Canal, an addition to the Rideau, was a private venture. The enterprising settlers of Perth built their own canal, with five wooden locks, to join with the Rideau Canal. Opened in 1834, it ensured Perth's participation in the commercial trade of Upper Canada. It was replaced later by a second Tay Canal, and in 1984 the turning basin in downtown Perth was reconstructed.

From Lake Ontario at Kingston, the Rideau Canal begins its ascent of the

Cataraqi River system. On its way, it passes through the Cataraqi Marsh, an extensive wetland in the St. Lawrence Lowlands. At Kingston Mills, the most southerly lockstation, boats climb the flight of locks past towering granite cliffs onto the Frontenac Axis. This rugged landscape, dominated by rocky outcrops and sculptured valleys, is part of the Canadian Shield. From lake to lake, the canal rises to its highest point in Upper Rideau Lake.

At the summit, the scenery changes. The canal begins its gentle descent through the Rideau Lakes and the Rideau River. It passes through the farmlands of the Smiths Falls limestone plain and meanders peacefully through shallow marshes, alive with birds and other wildlife.



Merrick Mill, Merrickville, 1848. The roof is now gone.
Bob Rowell

Equally inviting are the towns and villages along the canal. The historical and architectural heritage of these settlements reflects the 159 year history of the canal. These towns offer unrivalled country hospitality and numerous festivities to entertain visitors.

The remaining portion of the canal provides a pleasant transition from rural Ontario to the urban setting of the nation's capital. From Hog's Back to the Ottawa River, the canal forms the heart of Ottawa's parkland, culminating in the majestic staircase of eight locks at the foot of Parliament Hill".³



Brick house near Andrews ville on the Rideau Canal north east of Merrickville.
Bob Rowell



Brick house c 1860 near Andrews ville, on the Rideau Canal, at Nicholson's lock.
Bob Rowell

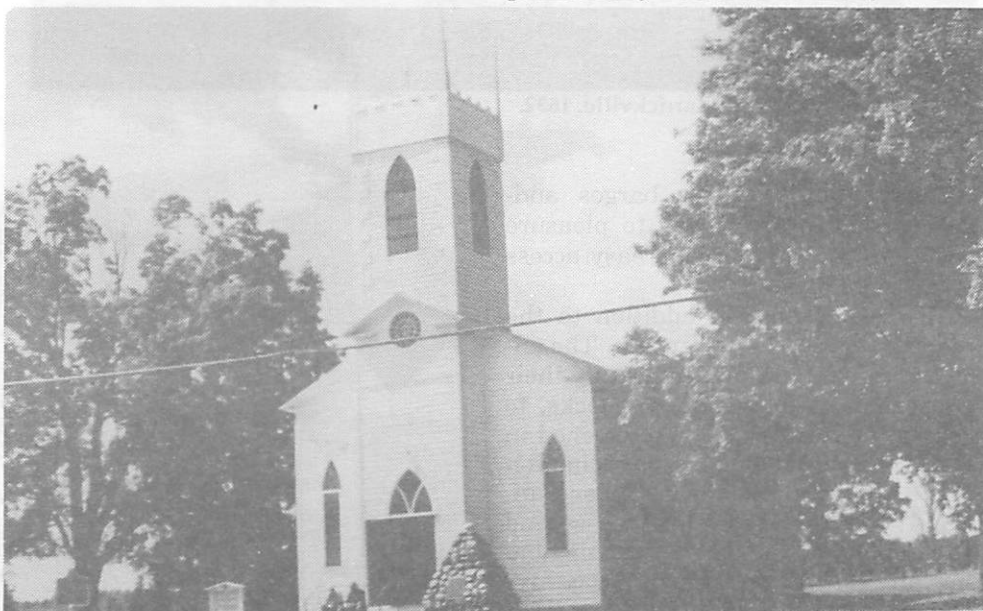
ARCHITECTURE OF THE RIDEAU CORRIDOR

Barbara Humphreys in her article "The Architecture of the Rideau Corridor" describes a study of the buildings in the area. The survey was undertaken in 1969. The survey was designed to record all pre-1880 habitable structures and also to serve as a pilot project for the Canadian Inventory of Historic Buildings.

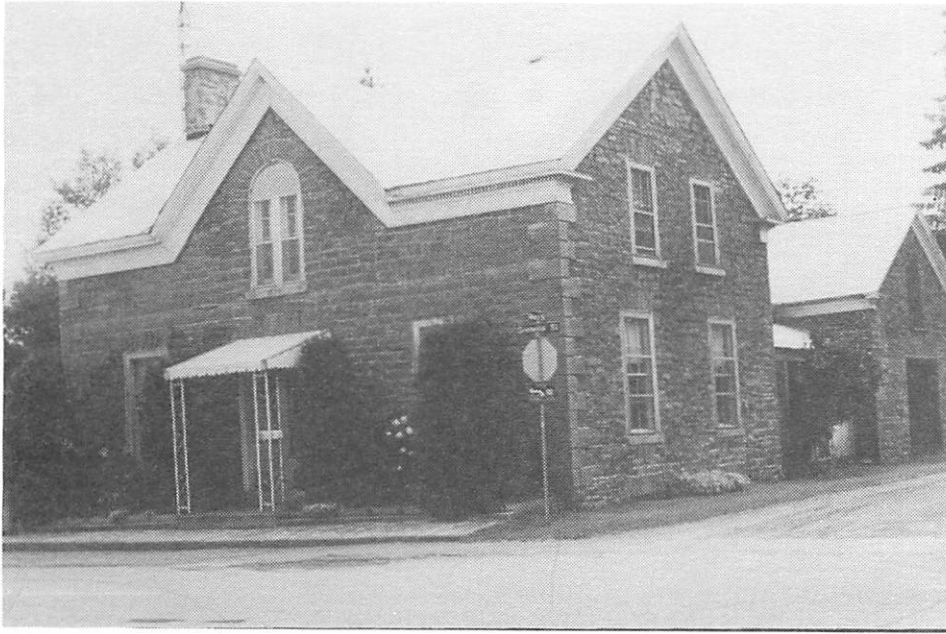
The first buildings were likely log structures. A large number of stone houses built in the area between 1830 and 1860 were probably built by stonemasons who arrived in the area to work on the Rideau Canal. The survey recorded 1,677 houses of log, stone, frame and brick. Barbara Humphrey's article uses representative examples of each type of building material used

and includes excellent photos to illustrate the examples. The article includes residences, defensive buildings of the canal, such as blockhouses, churches, schools and commercial, social and administrative buildings. At the end of the article, Barbara Humphreys writes this conclusion.

"This, then, is the heritage: a concentration of 19th-century buildings which form a microcosm of rural Upper Canada 120 years ago and a tangible expression of the pioneering skill, faith and determination in the creation of an environment which still retains much of its original charm. Fortunately the heritage is living one and great credit is due those who have kept it this way: the descendants of the original families who have carefully maintained the family homes; newcomers who have rescued and sympathetically restored so many of the



Christ Church, Burritts Rapids, 1831.
Bob Rowell



Stone house in Burritts Rapids.
Bob Rowell

houses; historical societies and local historians who have contributed endless time and effort to preserve threatened structures and to interest the residents of the region in their history and heritage.

Parts of this heritage, however, continue to be seriously threatened. The small rural schools and churches, the large commercial buildings in the small towns, the old inns, the mills, the tradesmen's shops have been rendered inadequate by the relentless pressure of social and economic change. To resent or now attempt to stifle the progress of the area would indeed be no tribute to the pioneers who worked so hard to ensure it; but in

making our contributions, enough must be preserved to show the contributions of others along the way. Preservation of our architectural heritage is surely the finest tribute we can make to Canada's pioneer past."⁴

Sources:

¹Barbara A. Humphreys, *The Architectural Heritage of the Rideau Corridor, Occasional Papers in Archaeology and History No. 10*, (National Historic Parks and Sites Branch, Parks Canada, Indian and Northern Affairs, Ottawa, 1974.) p.15.

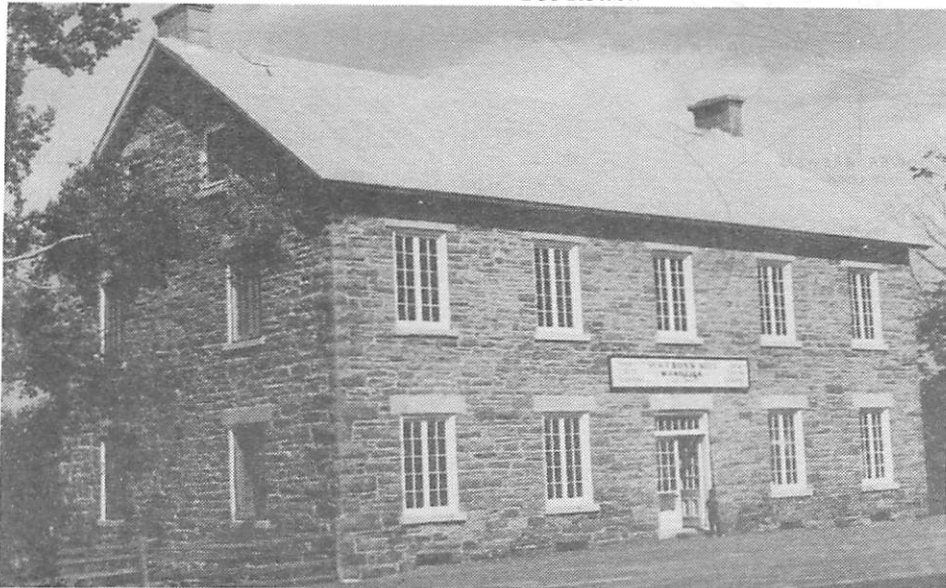
²Robert Legget, *Rideau Waterway* (University of Toronto Press, 1955.) p.17.

³Rideau Canal Pamphlet (Environment Canada Parks Services, 1990.)

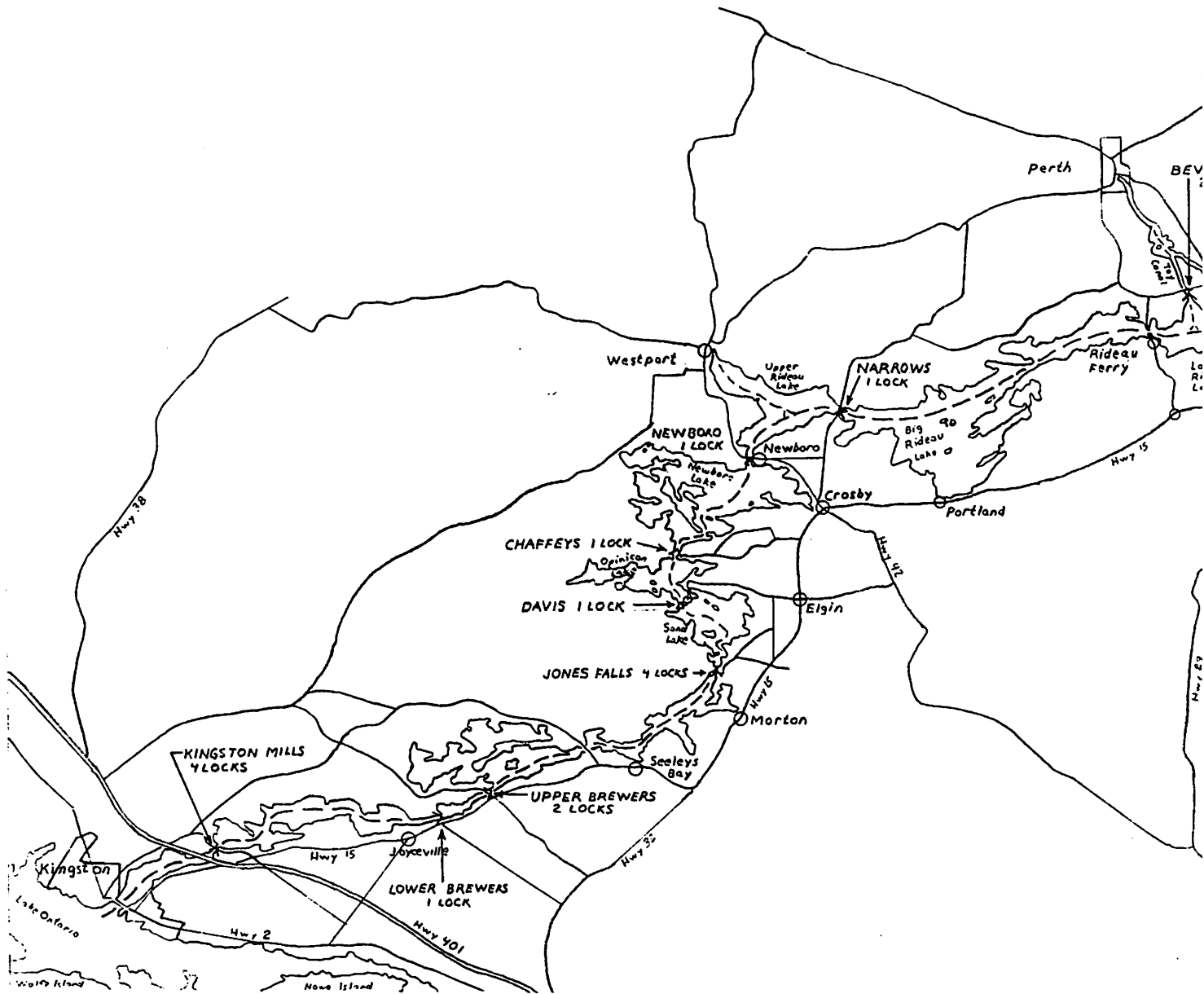
⁴Barbara Humphreys, p. 69.

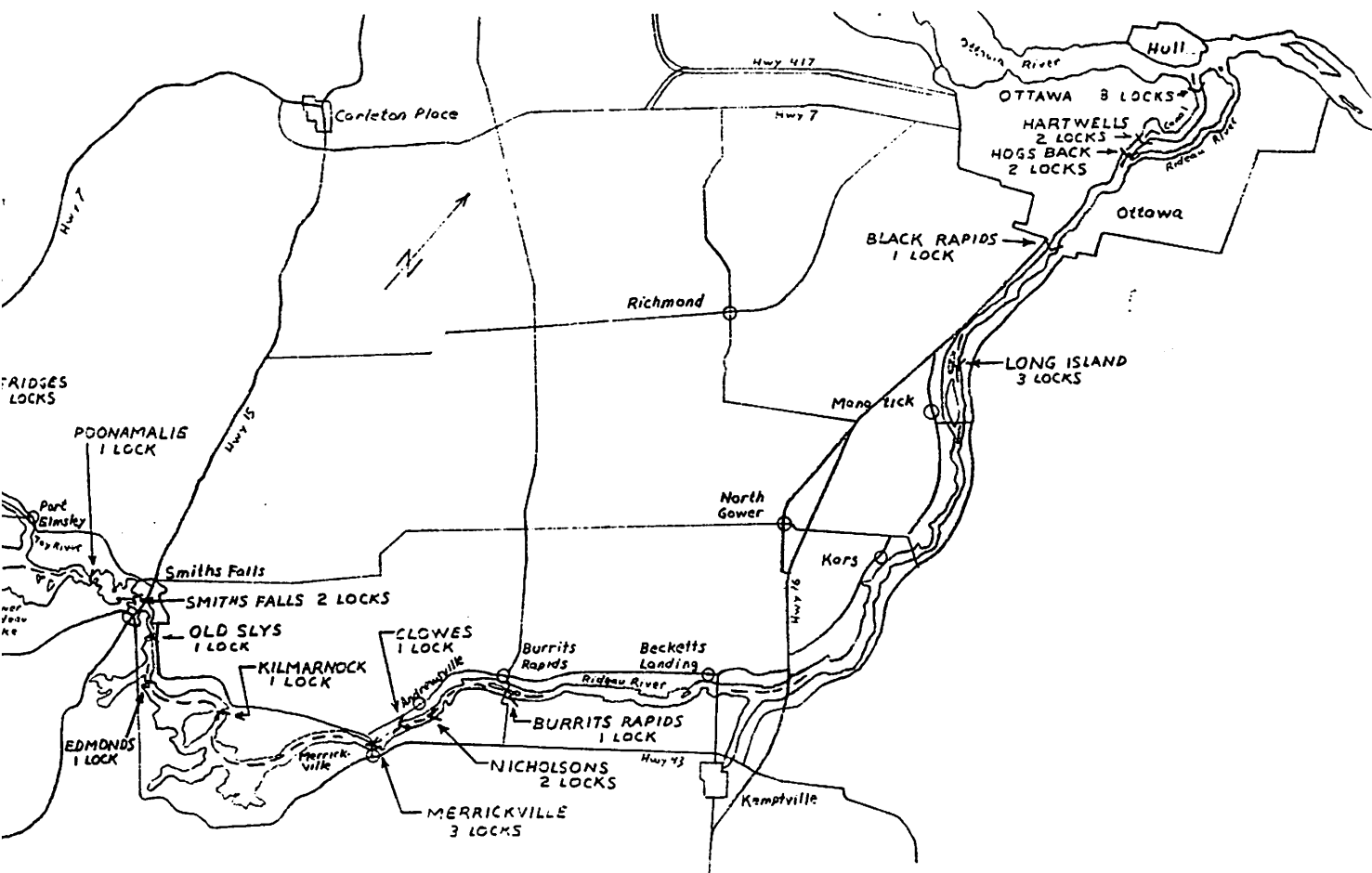


Dickinson House, 1868, Manotick, Ontario, office of the local Conservation Authority.
Bob Rowell



Watson Mill at Manotick, Ontario, 1860, built for Moss K. Dickinson and Joseph Currie.
Bob Rowell





RIDEAU CANAL

An August 1992 Holiday on Wolfe Island

It is God's country: and people are living there too. This place is Wolfe Island, celebrating too its bicentennial this year, its village Marysville, a twenty-five minute free ferry ride from Kingston, Ontario. The occasion was an invitation to the unveiling of a National Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada plaque to the Town Hall, constructed in 1859 to the design of Edward Horsey, well-known Kingston architect also responsible for Frontenac County Courthouse and Elizabeth Cottage in Kingston among other buildings. With some 1,100 year-round residents the population swells to 4,000 or so in the summer with visitors enjoying its relative peace, water-side location and extensive shoreline. The first perhaps of the Thousand Islands, the "plug", as it were, at the end of Lake Ontario where it flows into the St. Lawrence River, it is the largest of those separated lands, some six miles (9 km) at its widest point and about seventeen and a half (29 km) from end to end. Like the mainland at this point it is limestone, in some places thinly covered, in other sections with deeper soils, providing good farmland. Arriving just five minutes before the 9:30



The ceremony at the unveiling of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada plaque commemorating the Wolfe Island Town Hall, held on 15 August 1992.

Peter John Stokes

a.m. ferry's departure we were the second to last vehicle allowed on, a bonus for we had an extra hour to spend exploring the island before the ceremony began at 2:00 p.m.

So, on arrival, off we headed, after a brief stop to photograph the Town Hall

before everything was quite set up. Our intention was to follow Highway 96, first along the north shore westwards, then south and back towards the east on Highway 95 to Point Alexandria, where a ten-minute ferry to Cape Vincent, New York operates on a regular schedule and on demand for a modest fee. Then northwards across country via township roads joining 96 again beyond the east end of the village of Marysville, catching a glimpse there of the island's principle industry, the local cheese factory operated by Kraft. We zig-zagged eastwards along 96 to Port Metcalf at the eastern tip, now but a name, and a small but scattered group of cottages for the main. But it was on this leg of our journey that we savoured perhaps the last unspoiled section of the King's Highway, as it gently cascade down the rolling landscape, lined and canopied by majestic white oaks. There were many signs of earlier settlement: groves of black locust, low meadows of el-ecampane and fences fringed with the golden heads of tansy. There were myriads of birds darting about; never had we seen so many swallows swooping by. We passed too a great blue heron standing serenely in its pool.



Stone farmhouse east of Marysville with ornamental cast iron hoods to openings c. 1855.

Peter John Stokes

As we criss-crossed the island we did note some fascinating buildings like the delightful St. Margaret's Anglican Church (which we thought called itself Trinity on its notice board) at the west end of Marysville, a simple Gothic Revival structure in the local limestone finished with a tower and an open bell-cage topped by a spire, strangely reminiscent of Gibbs. Then shortly came a stone house, storey and a half, a three-bay front crowned by a gable, its triangular-headed window lighting the upstairs hall, the centre entrance below a very handsome design, the transom Tudor-arched, and with a roundel

ing industry, to Fort Henry and the waterfront of Kingston.

Much of the island was obviously once more densely populated by people who farmed there. Even now there are signs that this working rural population continues to shrink as better farms tend to expand and poorer ones are given up. The clumps of silver poplar and the odd lilac still mark the locations of these farmsteads, sometimes crumbling barns and sheds and occasional foundation also, their sites usually crowning the slight knolls in the very gently rolling landscape. An early twentieth century, frame, one-room schoolhouse, now

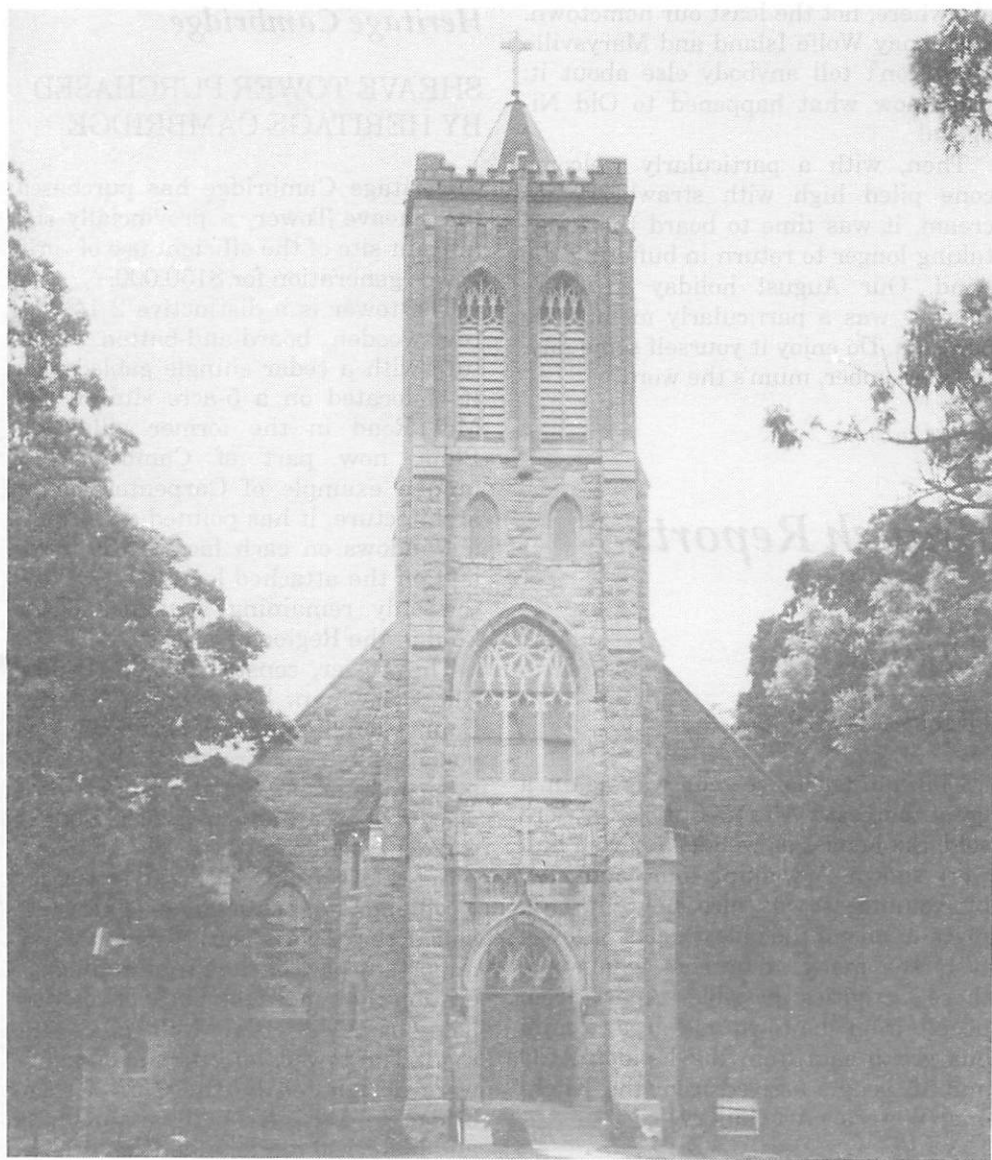
kept farmhouse with very elaborate cast iron cornices to openings including a very wide one above the tripartite front gable window. This might have been a house of c. 1855.

As we drove on we came to St. Margaret's small companion near the east end, Christ Church, also Anglican, a simple hall form, steep-roofed, with porch entrance and small, narrow lancet windows, a stone structure set in an interesting graveyard. The east end is now heavily buttressed for extra support. Another graveyard appeared closer to Point Alexandria partly sequestered in a beautiful grove of trees on the edge of a woodlot: we wondered if once a church had been there, but it is further east where another church burnt beside its cemetery.

Before returning to the ceremonies we enjoyed our picnic lunch set out on a flat rock at Dawson Point. Here another ferry dock, perhaps an alternative in an emergency, has been constructed. The weather was gloriously sunny but the breeze cool, and again we had a splendid view north-westwards towards Kingston, the Martello towers very prominent in the scenery.

Then back to Marysville which had enjoyed its summer parade in the morning and now awaited the ceremonial unveiling of the plaque commemorating the Wolfe Island Town Hall. The program was well organized, the master of ceremonies being John White. The present and former reeve spoke and the local member of Parliament on behalf of the Minister of the Environment. Among the dignitaries was Lily Inglis, architect, ACO and Advisory Board member and even more importantly now a member of the Ontario Heritage Foundation. After the unveiling ceremony it was like Old Home Week: we enjoyed seeing so many we knew, might have expected, others quite unexpected among whom we would like to mention Margaret (Peg) Angus, Olive and Roy Turner who are summering on Simcoe Island off Wolfe's north-western tip, and Harold Brais, for many years Superintendent of Fort Henry who retired to neighbouring Howe Island and whom we have not seen for far too long. We found him enjoying the refreshments proffered by the community organizers.

Thus Wolfe Island's Town Hall was commemorated on the 15th August



The Church Of Our Lady Of The Sacred Heart, 1917. "West" front.
Peter John Stokes

to its elaborate sash, sidelights and heavily moulded door. This represented perhaps the 1850s or early 1860s. But what a view! - northwards across the water and the tip of Garden Island, once the centre of a ship build-

boarded up, is the only sign near the cross-roads marked on the map as Scotch Settlement. Another house we noted, also in stone, was a five-bay, storey-and-a-half building, also with a gable over the centre entrance, a well-

1992. Although the exterior is largely intact we were a little concerned that since the photograph in the program was taken for Marion MacRae's and Anthony Adamson's book Cornerstones of Order (1983) the original sash have been replaced by a modern imitation. And we realized after hearing the retired reeve's comments about the building's historic deficiencies that not even in Wolfe Island can a building escape "improvement". So now a more efficient municipal office has superseded the town meeting hall and nut-brown plywood and dropped ceilings purvey a modern sense of comfort and security. Plus ça change, plus ça même chosé!

After the ceremony, some visitors scrambled to leave the island, but only fifty cars can get on at a time. So, having explored most of the island in a quick survey in the morning, we had perhaps three quarters of an hour to explore the village of Marysville, not completely, but in a little more detail, having, however, to miss the displays set out in honour of the occasion. Perhaps the most magnificent structure is the 1917 Gothic church of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, the Roman Catholic splendour built to serve a parish, created in the early 1850s, having had two earlier buildings. The exterior is in stone, a buttressed aisled nave, apsidal sanctuary and square front tower. The interior, soaring gracefully above a Gothic arcade supported on slender cast-iron columns softly marbled, is quite breathtaking. It is a grand, uplifting, but not intimidating interior, enriched by stained glass windows.

Our brief walk through the village was a particular delight, the informal mix of housing ages and styles and the happy juxtaposition of functional accessory buildings still in active use. There were some particularly beautiful gardens, dooryards filled with glorious flowers - lilies, mallow, dahlias, sunflowers and myriad mauves and wines of cosmos among many other species and colours. Then across one block gardens joined gardens with a backdrop of corn to the edge of the next street, the houses on the far side peering over: on the reverse rose-pink mallow, flourishing dill and other glories of foliage and flower in profusion. We caught a glimpse too of a fourth church, St. Andrew's United Church, a handsome Gothic Revival design in brick with a

square tower and octagon spire, a building judged to be of the late 1860s or early 1870s and likely of Presbyterian persuasion originally.

Although there are signs of change - vinyl siding no less, and the odd intrusive building, the village and its character remains remarkably unspoilt. Even the island bakery in its shocking pale blue smock seems a happy accident if not comic relief - and it does attract attention. But the informality, even the cracked sidewalks, were a pleasant relief from the contrived artificiality becoming so common elsewhere, not the least our hometown. Long may Wolfe Island and Marysville last! Don't tell anybody else about it: you know what happened to Old Niagara!

Then, with a particularly welcome cone piled high with strawberry ice cream, it was time to board the ferry, taking longer to return in buffeting the wind. Our August holiday in God's country was a particularly memorable occasion. Do enjoy it yourself some day: but remember, mum's the word!

Peter John Stokes

Branch Reports

Port Hope

HOUSE TOUR

The annual house tour was again a great success. All 1500 tickets were sold. Six houses as well as a parish hall were shown. A walking tour conducted by volunteers was also held. It took place in one of the oldest parts of town. It is the many volunteers who make these activities possible. Apart from people from the town and area, a mini bus group came from the London ACO and 45 people arrived from the Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery.

CANADIAN ART MARKET

The president of Sotheby's (Can.) Inc., Christina Orobetz, gave an illustrated talk on the Canadian art market. She covered the subject from a monetary progression as well as from the historical aspect. We were told of the financial gains Canadian art has

made in world markets, as well as at home, and her excellent slides gave a pictorial view of our own artists from the beginning of our country to contemporary times.

Among the splendid slides of art work was a painting done by David Blackwood, a resident of our town. This talk coincided with an exhibit of his work over a ten year period at the Art Gallery of Northumberland, Cobourg.

Marion W. Garland

Heritage Cambridge

SHEAVE TOWER PURCHASED BY HERITAGE CAMBRIDGE

Heritage Cambridge has purchased the Sheave Tower, a provincially significant site of the efficient use of early power generation for \$150,000.

The tower is a distinctive 2 1/2 storey wooden board-and-batten structure with a cedar shingle gabled roof. It is located on a 5-acre site on Old Mill Road in the former village of Blair, now part of Cambridge. A unique example of Carpenter Gothic architecture, it has pointed arch Gothic windows on each face of the tower and on the attached lean-to shed. It is the only remaining structure of its kind in the Region of Waterloo.

The Tower, constructed in 1876 by Allan Bowman, has been a Waterloo County landmark for generations, a favourite subject of professional and amateur painters and photographers. It is also a perennially popular Sunday drive attraction.

Set back from the road in boggy woodland, its picturesque appearance belied the tower's early history as an important part of the grain milling operation that once took place at the Carlisle Grist Mill (Blair Mill) across the road. The tower, and its surroundings were designated by the City of Cambridge in 1987 for both architectural and historical merit under the terms of the Ontario Heritage Act.

Historically, it was the first water wheel operation to use mill race water twice, one of the smallest water projects in the area. It represented an important part of the industrial development of Waterloo Region. Architecturally, it is a unique example of the Carpenter Gothic style and the

only such structure left in the Region and probably one of a handful left anywhere in Canada.

The name "Sheave" has sometimes mistakenly been attributed to the pyramidal "sheaf" shape of the tower. The word "sheave" refers to a large, grooved wheel in the top of the tower. Water, which had powered the mill wheel, ran downstream through a spillway that went under the south wall of the tower, turning a turbine. This then turned the "sheave" attached to a large beam in the gable peak. A continuous cable running from the sheave ran back across to the mill more than 300 feet away and powered other mill machinery. It was an ingenious secondary use of water power. The original grooved wheel is no longer there, but the beam that supported it still projects out beyond the front eaves of the building.

(The remaining part of the original Blair Mill is still there, operating as a privately owned feed business although it has only two of its original four stories. Water power is no longer used.)

Until recently, the tower site was part of a much larger parcel, originally the home of well-known families in the area, including the Dicksons. Part of the property was sold previously, including the original stone farm house. The remainder, a 2.9 hectare site upon which the tower sits, has now been sold the Heritage Cambridge.

Heritage Cambridge, which is a local branch of the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario, Inc., used its Community Heritage Fund to finance the purchase. The Fund purchases, sympathetically restores and sells designated heritage properties at a profit to build up funds for further such purchases. The original money for the fund came from the Province of Ontario, the City of Cambridge, the Waterloo Regional Heritage Foundation and private donations.

The purchase of the Sheave Tower is the second major project undertaken by Heritage Cambridge. The first was the McDougall Cottage on Grand Avenue South in the former Galt area of Cambridge. In that case the rundown cottage was purchased, restored and sold. (Of particular note was the restoration of a unique and colourful frieze painted in one of the cottage's principal rooms.)

Negotiations for the purchase of the



Sheave Tower, near Blair, Ontario, 1876.
Photo courtesy Heritage Cambridge

Sheave Tower were conducted by an advisory management group of the Community Heritage Fund; the board of Heritage Cambridge authorized the purchase.

Plans for the site are being considered; for now it will remain a passive site, available to organized school visits, etc., only by permission.

(Heritage Cambridge has inherited, and honours, an agreement attached to the title, reached in 1967 between the Waterloo Historical Society and the then-owner Florence Dickson. It gives the officers and executive of the Society a right-of-way onto the property to restore, repair or maintain the tower and its view from the road.)

Some work will probably be under-

taken to repair and secure the tower. Discussions are taking place about severing part of the site east of the tower for resale to replenish the Fund. Such a severance is governed by development and site planning requirements already in place with the City of Cambridge.

Heritage Cambridge President, Kathy McGarry, said the organization wants to be cautious, now that it has secured the entire parcel. It is eager to maintain the site surrounding the tower in as natural a condition as possible. "Part of the reason for the purchase is that it secured for future generations a unique structure in its original context," she said. "Anything we do would have to be consistent."

PRESTON SPRINGS GARDENS

Built in 1890, Preston Springs Gardens served first as a hotel and later a nursing home, but years of neglect left the building in a dilapidated condition and eventually led to its closure in 1990.

Now, a prospective new owner with new plans intends to reopen the grand old building on Fountain Street at the end of King Street in the Preston section of Cambridge.

If all goes well, the sale of the building will be finalized within the next two or three weeks and work will start with an opening of an 82-room retirement home, said Peter Hunter, the managing partner in a consortium which plans to spend more than \$2

curred naturally, the building was also used to house WRNS (Women's Royal Naval Service) during the Second World War.

Spring said the building's exterior was designated for its architectural value by LACAC in 1992.

"The building makes an important contribution to the streetscape. I can't imagine it not being there when you drive down King Street," she said.

Spring said she was excited about the prospect of the old hotel being refurbished. The structure was closed after it failed to meet fire and building codes four years ago.

City planner Hans Madan said the city is anxious to see the building restored and used again. He said tight parking wouldn't restrict reuse of the

some other areas in the building designated as well.

While the designation restricts what can be done to the building, it also makes the owners eligible for some provincial grants that could be used to help restore the building.

Hunter said each of the 81 rooms will have its own washroom and some suites will include bedrooms and sitting rooms.

Hunter said great care will be taken to preserve the terazzo floor and the large ornate beams in the lobby.

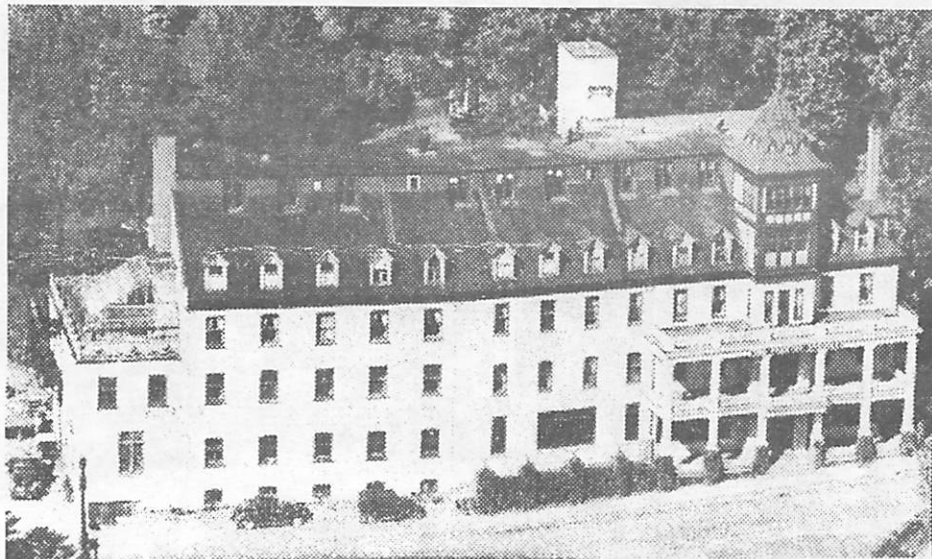
*Reprinted from the Kitchener-Waterloo Record, Wednesday, November 9, 1994.
Bob Burt, Record Staff*

Heritage Oxford

On July 16, 1994, the Woodstock Museum reopened to the public after a year of major restoration. An important and gracious old public building has been renewed into a modern functioning structure without any loss to its' original and familiar character. A building that only 30 years ago was threatened with demolition is now fresh and vigorous and the centre of community attention again.

The museum was originally the Town Hall and construction began in 1847 and completed in 1852 one year after Woodstock gained official town status. A Neo-Georgian style copied after the town hall in Woodstock, Oxfordshire, England. The city was named in 1834 by our founder, Admiral Henry Vansittart, after this small village where he received his education. The cost was 2,200 British pounds.

The main floor was the first market and a concert hall on the second level was used for social events such as dances, meetings, plays, concerts and court hearings. The building was the focus of social and political activities for over a hundred years. From 1865 to 1890 an addition on the back (south) housed the fire department. In 1871 the market was removed allowing a council chambers and a mayors office to be established on the main floor. This was restored in 1986 to the chamber's 1897 appearance. In 1871 a second addition was added to the back to house the public market scales. (This was demolished in 1913.) Even the basement was a busy place. In 1861 it was used for packing pork and as an



The Fountain Street landmark shown in a 1964 Record file photo.
Kitchener-Waterloo Record

million to acquire and upgrade the building.

Financing is in place, the zoning is OK and once the sale closes, work can begin, Hunter said in a recent interview.

Plans for a new life for the old building are seen as good news for city planning and heritage officials.

The building has a long and colourful history in the community. People from all over North America were attracted by the nearby spa and sulphur springs.

People suffering from liver, kidney and chronic diseases frequented the hotel and the spa for years, according to Valerie Spring, the city's coordinator on the Local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee.

Although best known for its association with the sulphur springs which oc-

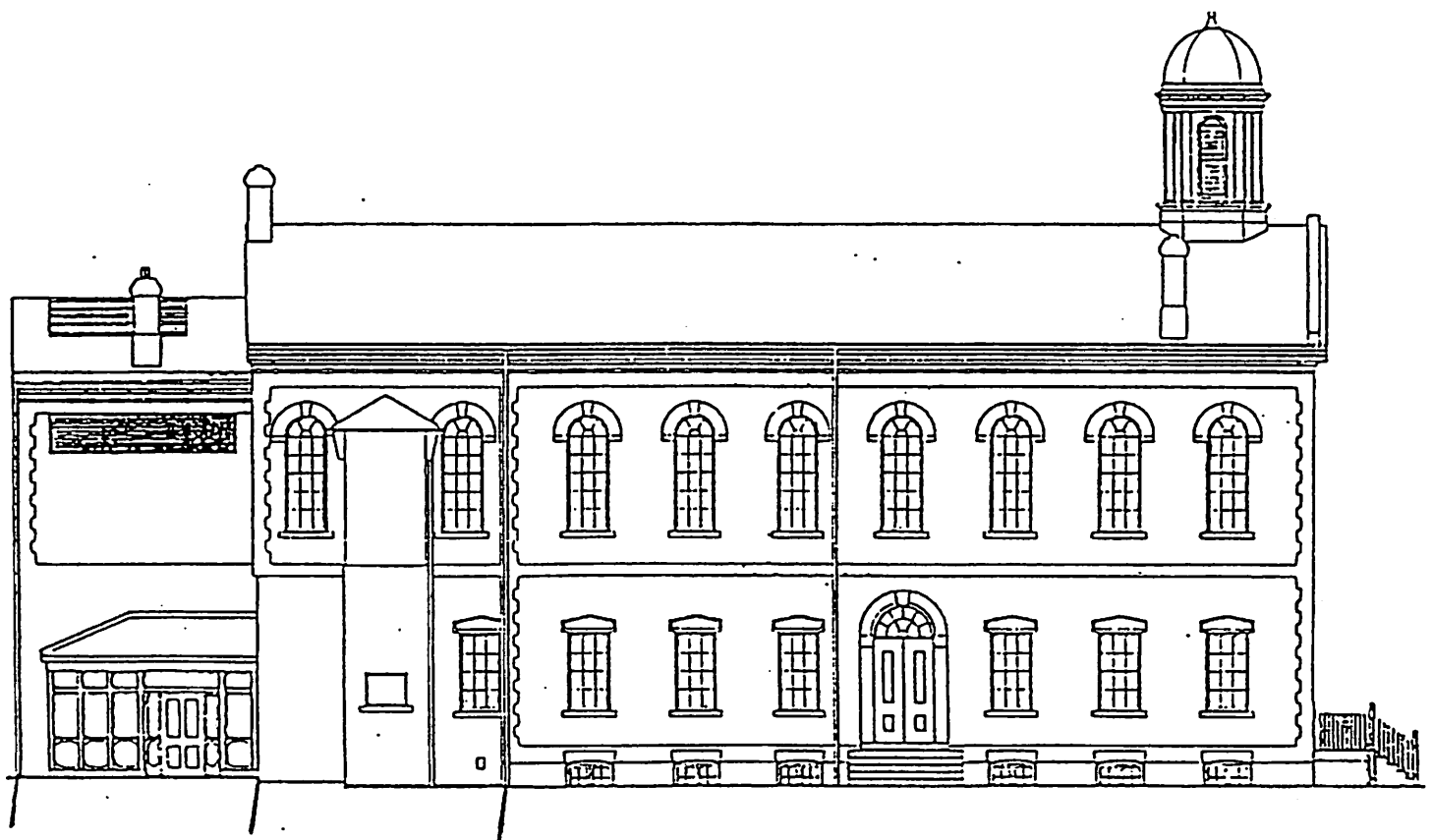
property because it is considering a non-conforming use.

"We're really optimistic and it seems that it is a realistic proposal."

What adds to the excitement for Spring is the fact that Hunter has hired Nick Hill, a heritage architect and local heritage researcher and historian Margaret Goodbody has been engaged to do historical research.

Hunter said that Hill had "all kinds of wonderful ideas about how to bring the building up to date so it meets code while retaining the architectural characteristics of the day. And Margaret Goodbody came up with some invaluable information about the history of the area."

Hunter said while the exterior front of the building already is designated as architecturally significant, he would like to see the inside foyer and perhaps



1994 Addition
Firehall Addition
Single Story 1865
Second Story 1870

Original Building 1853:
Market, Social Hall,
Mayors Office,
Police Department
and Local Lockup.

Chris Borgal
Allan Avls } Architects

Woodstock Museum, former Town Hall built 1853
Drawing courtesy Heritage Oxford

armoury for the Oxford Rifles. Between 1865 and 1895 the basement served as the police headquarters and a cage-like cell served as a lock-up.

The building was also witness to the world famous Birchall-Benwell murder trial (1890), a presentation by Oscar Wilde (1883), music by Gene Autry (1940), and even served as a meeting place for the Klu Klux Klan (1925).

In 1960 this grand old building was threatened with demolition when it no longer could meet the spacial needs of the city. A referendum was held and 72% voted in favour of saving the building. A real victory in those times of vigorous urban renewal. In 1968 the city vacated the building to move their offices to the former post office. The museum which had been officially opened in the second storey hall in 1947 was now given the entire building for its' operations.

Renovations are not complete but it is open to the public and a quick tour will readily show the attention to historical accuracy and a decade of plan-

ning has produced a beautiful and efficient modern museum. At the cost of 1.6 million dollars, financed by the City of Woodstock, JobsOntario, and the Federal Government, has resulted in a facility that will ensure the restoration and preservation of artifacts, the possibility of a wider range of programming, and the promotion of public interest and participation.

Structural changes have allowed for rooms for meetings, offices, storage, work and mechanical space, and display areas. Reinforcement of the structure, insulation, sprinkler and electrical system, and other state of the art technology has been installed on all three levels allowing for a temperature controlled environment.

All this is very impressive but what really makes the most impression is the restored decorative features. The reopening of the floor to ceiling hall windows, the stencilling, the soft colours, the restored front steps, and the woodwork of mouldings and railings gives one a real appreciation for the

care and knowledge of the original designers.

The Woodstock Museum is ready for another hundred years of service to this community and a good deal of credit needs to go to the staff and the people on the Board of Directors over the years for their persistence, patience and dedication to this building.

Jack Hedges

Audrey Spencer, 1907 - 1994

Audrey Spencer, born in the family homestead her grandfather built in Cayuga, on 8 December 1907, died in Simcoe on 11 January 1994 after a short illness.

Audrey will be remembered not only by her family, especially her surviving sister and great-nephew, the heritage planner David McClung, but by so many friends and colleagues who enjoyed the pleasure of her company and her encouragement over the years, particularly those involved with the crafts movement across the province. For Audrey was best known for her

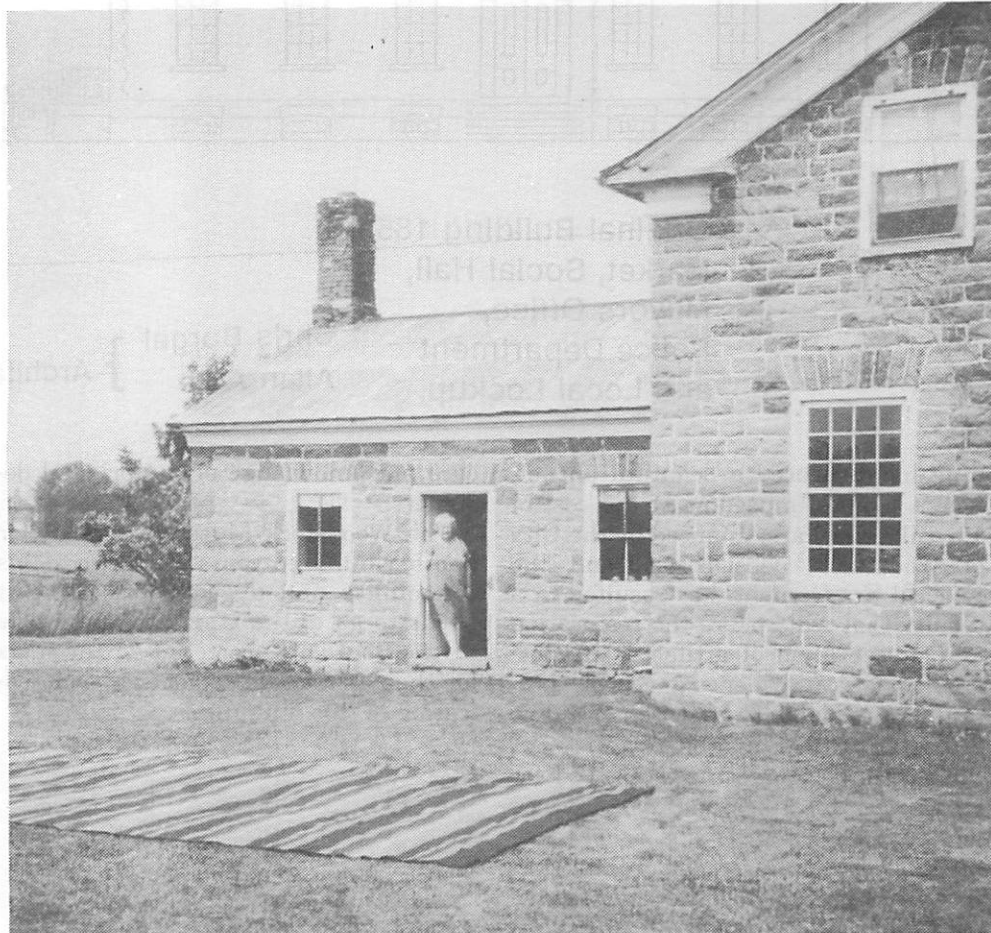
was also on call making hand-woven carpets, like that for the north-west bedroom of the Grange (The Art Gallery of Ontario) in Toronto where some 250 pounds of wool were used. She also produced carpets for other historic restorations such as the Schuyler Mansion in New York State.

But perhaps the greatest tribute we could pay Audrey Spencer is for making possible the preservation of the Carman House in Iroquois where her agreeing to live in the apartment created upstairs made the scheme workable. For many years she continued to demonstrate the old brick bake-oven there and cooking on the hearth as well as spinning and weaving, and kept a small store where she sold Canadian handicrafts of the highest quality. That

al memorable people we met at Upper Canada Village during that tough but most pleasurable exercise. And she will always be remembered for her joyful self and comforting presence. Our sympathy goes out to her family and many friends.

During World War II Audrey Spencer joined the R.C.A.F. (W.D.) and taught aircraft recognition. After the war she was attached to the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture involved with craft programs mainly in rural areas where she stimulated and guided local efforts and organizations for several years and made many friends across the Province. But interestingly enough, though Audrey's forebears came from Winewall, small textile centre near Colne on the Lancashire side of Britain's Pennines, it was her sister's mother-in-law, David McClung's great-grandmother, who first satisfied Audrey's curiosity in her family walking wheel and taught her to be a spinner, to be followed by her consuming interest and great skill in weaving.

Peter John Stokes



Audrey Spencer at the doorway of the tail of the Carman house in Iroquois, Ont.
Her handwoven rug is on the lawn.

Peter John Stokes

weaving and teaching and her stimulus of many local organisations especially the Carman-Forward Weavers Guild in Eastern Ontario which she helped found when living at the Carman House in Iroquois while she continued to manage the historic crafts program at Upper Canada Village. She

story and her achievement are part of the Carman House Caper we hope to share with you in the not too distant future, but sadly regretful we did not produce it earlier for Audrey herself to review and make her own inimitable contribution.

Audrey Spencer was one of the sever-

Coming Events

HERITAGE CAMBRIDGE

HISTORIC HOUSE TOUR

**Saturday, April 29th,
1995 from 10:00 - 4:00 pm.**

One church, one business and several houses, as well as **English cream tea** (served between 12 - 4:30 pm) **included with ticket.** Children 12 years old and over are welcome. Tickets can be purchased at the door (**\$12.00**) or in advance. For further information, call Sheilagh at (519) 622-2988.

***Conference and
Annual General
Meeting
May 19-21, 1995,
Ottawa***

The Annual General Meeting is now being held at the University of Ottawa. Full particulars will be sent to all members in the new year. The ACO is no longer associated with the meeting of the American Vernacular Forum.

***Call For Papers
Vernacular Two
At The Confluence
The Rideau and the Ottawa
The Influence of Style on the Vernacular***

Call for Papers for a conference on Vernacular buildings to be held at Ottawa between May the 19th and the 21st. Those interested in giving a 35 minute paper should consider evaluating the degree to which high style has influenced the vernacular. Send 50 word synopsis of your theme to ACO Administrator John Manteiga at our office.

The Mallory House - Circa 1810

A remarkable survivor of the early 1800's the Mallory House is essentially a post and beam "Wilderness Georgian" style framed structure of nearly 2700 square feet, set on a rubble stone masonry foundation and located on 13 acres just east of Coburg.

Dominating the house is the massive central chimney stack and five brick fireplaces of medieval England origins and common to seventeenth century New England.

Sadly, this designated historical residence has been neglected in recent years and requires a new owner of vision and means to restore it to its former magnificence.

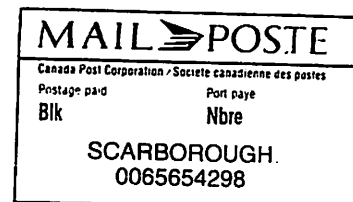
Background history and architectural reports are available by contacting John Clews or Judy Giberson at Choice of Service Realty Ltd., (905) 373-1980.

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